

Minutes of the Meeting of West Somerset Area Elders and Overseers

Saturday March 30th 2019

1/19 **Welcome and thanks to Taunton for their hospitality**

2/19 **Attendance** and Introductions: Pip Harris (Regional Vibrancy Worker) and Kathy Gollin were welcomed.

Bridgwater: Gilly Lee

Burnham-on-Sea: Prevented

Iminster: Prevented

Minehead: Prevented

Spiceland: Ali Domini, Sheila Whitlock

Taunton: John Ainsworth, Sheila Harvey (E&O Co-Clerk), Fran Hicks,
Anne Jackson Wild, Lynda Stewart

Wellington: Marian Dawson, Alan Keith, Avril Silk (E&O Co-Clerk)

3/19 **Apologies:** Shirley Anthony, Peter Atherton, Elizabeth Aveline, Georgina Cardew, Faith Cartwright, Huw Morgan, Anna Mullett, Irene Murphy, John Sivyer, Margaret Stenhouse, Steven Trelfas, Gian Zucchelli

4/19 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

8/18: There are 8 or 9 children in the Area Meeting overall. They move around the LMs on different Sundays. This ensures that they have a richer experience. It is important to link with Ruth Wall, the children's advocate. We all benefit from the children's presence.

Avril will ask Anna Mullett (Area Business Team correspondent) to make sure, via the appropriate Friend, that the Tabular statement is accurate.

17/18: Plans for a quiet day? We await an agenda item for Area Meeting.
Avril to check with Anna Mullett that this has been noted.

22/18: An update on plans for the Mental Health Day, Saturday October 25th, 2019 (Sheila)
The title for the day is 'Sanity, Spirituality and Psychiatry'. The publicity is being worked on. Quinton Deeley (Psychiatrist) will be the speaker in the afternoon. An out line programme has been created. The meeting is open to all those interested.
Pip told us that Bev Smith has been appointed nationally to help Meetings engage with anyone suffering from mental distress.
We were told of a new initiative 'Human Henge' led by Yvette Staelens, which uses locations with a numinous quality to help people.

24/18: We continue to question the best way to fulfil necessary aspects of our Area work but referred this to agenda item 5/19.

5/19 **Input from Pip Harris on eldership and oversight together with the value of Residentials. There will be a written appraisal from Huw Morgan as to how home groups are working out in Ilminster.**

Huw's appraisal was read out – they have sorted their group membership differently.

Pip Harris: she recommended Zelig Gross' book 'With a Tender Hand'. This is helpful when QF&P can be a bit obscure for newcomers trying grasp what Eldership and Oversight entails.

FAQs from Zelig Gross were handed out. It is necessary that each one of us accepts some level of responsibility for our Quaker community, otherwise 'things fall apart'. There is a need for the development of Friends' gifts. We talked about the 'convenor role'. The convenor only arranges meetings.

A Friend from each Meeting present: Bridgwater, Taunton, Spiceland and Wellington, described how their LM works in terms of Eldership and Oversight. Avril would welcome this in a brief written statement or diagram from each LM as a contribution to the Area News Letter.

Avril will request the same thing from those Meetings who were prevented from attending, Ilminster and Minehead. Burnham are too small to make this a realistic request from them.

It was recognised that Friends from the Area Meeting need to give support to LMs who may be struggling at present. We should be more aware of each LM's needs. The 'Worshipping Together' Sundays create a good opportunity for us to attend away from our own LMs and begin to get to know Friends in other LMs better.

Residentials: This would be an 'all-age' gathering. Whose responsibility would it be? In Pip's experience a dedicated group is needed of 6 or 7 people and of this group one or two members have to be particularly dedicated, doing the 'heavy lifting'. The jobs needed include perhaps cooking and certainly programming. The needs of families have to be met. There is also a need for single rooms. The right venue is an important factor. Residentials could happen every year or at longer intervals. Each time there could be a different approach. Every session within a residential might be 'all-age'. Friends in Devon were needing this kind of contact and were grateful for it. There can be a need for cars with the resultant environmental footprint. In Pip's experience there were plenty of offers of informal help but little for the 'heavy lifting'. Cost is an important factor and we reminded ourselves of Area resources to help meet this in individual cases.

Devon's was a joyful time and the childrens' presence was so important in enabling this.

The possibility of West Somerset organising something similar with be the main item on the October agenda. (Avril)

Our thanks to Pip for sharing her experience with us.

6/19 Replacements for Sheila Harvey and Avril Silk.

We agreed that this is an internal nomination process. The possibility of a rolling system of 2 Friends for Clerking and Minutes was raised. There is also the care of the 'hardship Fund' involved, which Avril looks after at present. Whatever is decided there is a need for a correspondence contact. Avril is happy to continue in her present role until Sheila's role (which she has laid down) has been taken and the right way forward discerned. Marion Dawson has agreed to work with Avril for the October meeting only.

This will also be an agenda item in October. (Avril)

7/19 Meetings for Learning

Bridgwater: They meet monthly and are concentrating on the particular challenges from the readings in a chapter of QF&P. This has proved to be both inspiring and fruitful.

Taunton: Meets monthly. The last two sessions have talked about suffering. Preparation for Yearly Meeting will follow next.

Wellington: There is a thriving 'solitary writers group' following Quaker principles.

Spiceland: 'What about Jesus' has been a recent topic and now they are preparing for the Yearly Meeting. The film showing of 'Pride' in a Tiverton Cinema was a success and well attended.

8/19 The different kinds of Spiritual support that we can offer each other

We had no additional thoughts here. We reiterated that it is important that we share the things that have been found helpful. (see 9/19)

9/19 Experiment with Light

2 Groups are meeting at Spiceland and Tiverton respectively. The support is building up. 'Meditation for the World' (?source) proved powerful. It's a very helpful tool.

10/19 AOB. N/A

11/19 Date and place of next meeting

We hope to meet again in Ilminster on Saturday, October the 19th.